



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
March 8, 2016

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### When to Call 911

**Bainbridge Island, Wash.,** (March, 2016) – There are times when calling 911 is clearly the correct course of action (e.g. medical emergency or house fire), at other times the decision to call 911 may be less obvious. Chief Matthew Hamner wants you to have no doubt about when it's appropriate to engage 911 on Bainbridge Island.

On Bainbridge Island both non-emergency and emergency calls should be directed to 911. CENCOM, a Kitsap County agency that coordinates emergency services response, dictates that no police departments in Kitsap County have a non-emergency line. If you need immediate assistance or would like to report a crime or suspicious activity, please dial 911.

Is there ever a time when calling 911 is inappropriate? A few weeks ago a house explosion occurred in South Kitsap County. For an hour after the explosion, the 911 system was overloaded with 911 calls. From approximately 4:00 p.m. to 4:15 p.m., two hundred and five 911 calls were attempted. Out of those calls, fifty four were delivered to the center and answered, and one hundred and fifty five received a fast busy (25.48% completed). From 4:15 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. there were one hundred and eighty nine attempted calls. Of those calls, eighty three were delivered to the center and one hundred and ten received a fast busy (43.01% completed).

The 911 network is sized to meet a national standard that equates to no more than one out of every one hundred calls receiving a fast busy during a “normal” busy hour. Most of the callers were calling to report that they had heard an explosion (people from all over the county heard it). **Please only call 911 if you see the event/know where it occurred or if you have damage or injuries at your location.** Calling to report that you heard an explosion, but do not know where, ties up the 911 system and potentially blocks someone who actually has information that would help to get responders to the scene, or you could be preventing people with unrelated emergencies from being able to get through.

According to Chief Matthew Hamner, “In order for our officers to provide the quickest and best service to the community possible, we ask that you implement the guidance above. I also want to encourage you to sign-up to receive Bainbridge Island emergency alerts so that you can stay informed when events happen on the island. You can sign-up for these alerts by visiting [www.nixle.com](http://www.nixle.com) or texting 98110 to 888777.”

If you have additional questions about utilizing 911, please visit the [Police page](#) on the City of Bainbridge Island website.

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